

There were new and strange problems of social contact. The white soldiers, for the most part, were opposed to serving Negroes in any manner, and were even unwilling to guard the camps where they were segregated or protect them against violence. "To undertake any form of work for the contrabands, at that time, was to be forsaken by one's friends and to pass under a cloud."¹¹

There was, however, a clear economic basis upon which the whole work of relief and order and subsistence could be placed. All around Grand Junction were large crops of ungathered corn and cotton. These were harvested and sold North and the receipts were placed to the credit of the government. The army of fugitives were soon willing to go to work; men, women and children. Wood was needed by the river steamers and woodcutters were set at work. Eaton fixed the wages for this industry and kept accounts with the workers. He saw to it that all of them had sufficient food and clothing, and rough shelter was built for them. Citizens round about who had not abandoned their plantations were allowed to hire labor on the same terms as the government was using it. Very soon the freedmen became self-sustaining and gave little trouble. They began to build themselves comfortable cabins, and the government constructed hospitals for the sick. In the case of the sick and dependent, a tax was laid on the wages of workers. At first it was thought the laborers would object, but, on the contrary, they were perfectly willing and the imposition of the tax compelled the government to see that wages were promptly paid. The freedmen freely acknowledged that they ought to assist in helping bear the burden of the poor, and were flattered by having the government ask their help. It was the reaction of a new labor group, who, for the first time in their lives, were receiving money in payment for their work. Five thousand dollars was raised by this tax for hospitals, and with this money tools and property were bought. By wholesale purchase, clothes, household goods and other articles were secured by the freedmen at a cost of one-third of what they might have paid the stores. There was a rigid system of accounts and monthly reports through army officials.

In 1864, July 5, Eaton reports: "These freedmen are now disposed of as follows: In military service as soldiers, laundresses, cooks, officers' servants, and laborers in the various staff depart-